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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0229

07/21/00

~ Songbird CGE2K Update! ~ People Are Talking! ~ Macworld Expo News!
~ Maxtor's 80 GB IDE HD! ~ AllAdvantage Layoff! ~ Test Strip 3.0!
~ 'Snake Oil' Web Scams! ~ BC To Rate Video Games ~ New iMacs!
~ Overwhelmed By E-Mail! ~ A-ONE Reader Feedback ~ Workplace Privacy!

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-* New Internet Domain Names Approved! *-
-* Microsoft Woos Mac Users With "Office:Mac" *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

What a gorgeous week, again! My only regret is that my vacation starts now and the weather may not be as pleasant as the past two weeks. Then again, now I'm on vacation rather than returning to work on Monday! Unlike my counterpart, Joe, I get more than two weeks of vacation a year!

It's been really hectic the past few weeks at work; this vacation is just what I've ordered for myself! It's budget time again where we are; and the administrative focus is on that almighty dollar, as Joe so accurately points out in his column. Spend less money and get more work done. Works for me! Wrong! There are occasions when you can do more with less, if you try hard enough. But eventually, there will be a peak before everything falls apart. Try and tell that to those in charge of the purse strings!

So, here I am putting the finishing touches on this week's issue while letting my mind wander to the things I hope to do during the next two weeks! Definitely some golf is involved. Some work in the yard, most likely. Lots of cold beer, some relaxing in the sun with a few good books, and a cool dip in the pool when the heat gets too much. Now that's a vacation!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. This is one of those times when I just don't have a clue as to what I'm going to bring up in my column.

I know that, even at my best, I don't provide you with the heights of either philosophy or comedy. But I try to make a point in my own humble way most of the time. I had considered a "best of" compilation a while back, but let's face it... There really isn't enough of the "best of" to do it. <smile>

Why is it that we work all year with the only bright spot being our two measly weeks of vacation and then, when it's finally here, it flies by in the blink of an eye and we're left marking days off on the calendar again?

Don't get me wrong... I'm not saying that I need to go someplace special or expensive or exotic in order to enjoy myself. All I really need is peace and quiet. All that packing and unpacking takes more out

of me than actually just working. And it seems that you just start to relax, and it's time to pack everything up again to go home. That's just the way we do it here in the states. I think Europe has the right idea: If you're going to do it, do it BIG. The average vacation in Germany is six to eight weeks. Other european nations have similar timetables, but here in the U.S. we've just got to make that dollar. Any more than two weeks might cost us a rung on the ladder or enable someone else's light to shine in the darkness left by our absence.

Well guess what. No matter whether you're there or not, your boss is going to be making money while paying you as little as he can and complaining about even that. At least I work for a small company, so I can put a face to the name 'Evil'. I pity the poor souls cursed with a job at some mega corporation that gets sold every other week and has a board of directors or some such nonsense. How could you ever know for sure who to blame for your dire state?

By the way, can you tell that I'm back from vacation?? <sad grin>

Well, I guess that's enough of that, huh? Let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info available on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Janka Gerhard asks about file name conventions:

"Several times now I downloaded zip files that included files with blanks in their name. So after unzipping I have files that neither can be renamed nor deleted. The only way to get rid of them I can think of is to save everything else from the partition, then deleting the whole partition and restoring the data. Does anybody have a better idea ? Maybe some way to edit the file name table on the HD (the best possible solution since then I could use the files)?"

John Garone tells Janka:

"If you're using ICD to boot your HD with, 'Cleanup.prg' will let you re-name bad filenames. Note: bypass the sector test (it takes forever) and if prompted to "reconstruct.....chains/files" click "NO" or you'll need another program like Diamond Edge to rename files that start with a "?" which Cleanup.prg creates!!!"

Jeff Armstrong asks about SCSI:

"Alright, I have a seemingly simple question. How can I force a boot to strictly ROM TOS or a floppy before any hard disk bootloaders kick in? I need to override AHDI before it turns on since I corrupted the sectors on my boot HD.

At bootup, the actual AHDI bootloader bombs. Every time with every configuration. SO I need to access the floppy to fix the drive. How is this possible? Or is my disk gone?"

Dr. Uwe Seimet, the author of HD Driver, tells Jeff:

"Try pressing the Alternate key (and keep it pressed until the desktop

appears) right after switching on your machine. If this doesn't help you'll have to disconnect the hard disk drive, switch on the computer, then carefully connect the drive, start the driver from floppy disk and clean up the mess."

Steve Sweet jumps in and adds:

"Hold down control or alternate, try either i cant remember which one, one bypasses hard disk boot, the other bypass's AUTO folder loading.

If AHDI is not totally poxed holding SHIFT - SHIFT might sort it."

Trevor Spencer adds his thoughts:

"If you still have problems - email me and I'll send you a program that will enable you to boot up with the hard drive off. You then switch it on and access it hopefully, I find it very handy for the odd occasion when a new program crashes the system for some reason. I use AHDI as well."

'Phantommm' asks about CPUs and stuff:

"Can anyone give me some advise on the best FPU to put into a CT2B Falcon. Like what's the fastest one that I would need?

Also, can someone tell me what difference does it make if you do the VGA Adapter Modification for the CT2B that the manual recommends? What will I gain by doing this modification?"

Robert Schaffner tells Phantommm:

"I use an 68882-33 as long I've had the CT2... perfectly. 68882-16, falcon standard part, won't run.

The video modification allows you to use the higher pixel clock from CT2 with falcon standard video adaptor. Falcon video adaptor had pin 15 normally connected to ground. Also you can remove one smt resistor below mainboard with the same result.

Pin 15 video port is connected via smt resistor R49 straight to pin 14 video. If any video adaptor outside falcon pull down pin 15 to gnd also pixel clock from CT2 goes to gnd."

Matthew Simpson-Morgan asks about customizing his desktop:

"I am wondering whether there is any way to customize the Gem desktop with a background image, short of a replacement desk program... ie, can the desktop.inf file on boot floppy be edited to load up a background image?

I use a Mega ST4 without hard drive, so I'm looking for something that can be easily customised on the boot disk. Any ideas???"

Martin-Eric Racine tells Matthew:

"Thing is the best replacement desktop around. It is shareware. You can find out more at <http://www.cix.co.uk/~inactive/> "

Mike Freeman jumps in and tells Martin-Eric:

"While I agree Thing is pretty good, I think he was asking about a

program that puts a picture in the background *without* a replacement desktop. I suggested DeskPic, or WINX's background pattern program. Does anyone else have any other suggestions I don't know about?"

Gergard Holscher adds:

"I don't know DeskPic, but anyway WINX would be good to install."

Mark Bedingfield asks Gerhard and Mike:

"Doesn't WINX need gemram to run? It put me off using it is it gobbles up more ram."

Gerhard replies:

"Yes, but the amount of used memory is not big, around 60 KBytes."

John Oakes posts this about what is probably my LEAST favorite science fiction movie:

"Last night on TV I saw Bladerunner probably for umteenth time. Still in the background shots we still had our famous Atari symbol. After this excellent film, they had a break down of what made the film unique, describing various techniques.

Which got me thinking of the uniqueness of our own personal machine. I feel we don't need to try and stick our heads above a parapet. As long as the majority enjoy what are the best about your own individual machine. Everyone's eye is always drawn to flashy gimmick, but as long as you know that you have a safe ground too return to, that is the part of enjoyment of the of seeing of Atari in the background."

Gerald Korner tells John:

"Yesterday in the cinema I saw a preview of the new movie "Road Trip". One of the actors wears all the time a red t-shirt with the ATARI-Logo. For me is this a reason, to watch this movie."

Eric McCormack adds:

"In the Italian movie Flight of the Innocent (1993) I'm not sure of the Italian title though, when we finally see the kidnapped/murdered boys bedroom, a 520/1040ST, monitor and mouse are on the desk."

Stephen Moss joins the discussion and asks:

"On a related note, what model Atari does John Connor (Edward Furlong) used in Terminator 2 to raid the cash point machine? is it a Stylus?"

Tomas Berndtsson tells Stephen:

"It was a Portfolio, probably a bit Hollywood-enhanced."

Bob King brings the discussion around to the real world:

"Just to add to the story of the uniqueness of the Atari family, in my job of determining the degree or otherwise of inventions, Atari software and hardware has been used against some very big companies indeed. Notably the 8-bit Atari Artist tablet and cartridge against the market leaders in pre and post-production TV graphics and Tom Hudson's 3D-CAD

decision, and the premise itself.

Personally, it's my opinion that violence in videogames is something that the government should leave alone - it's not their responsibility. Well, at least one of our readers disagrees with me and dropped me a line. The text of that message is below. I'll include my response after the comments.

From: David L. Ormand
To: dpj@delphi.com <dpj@delphi.com>
Subject: Censorship? Parental Responsibilities?
Date: Monday, July 17, 2000 2:43 PM

In response to your editorial:

>What's the problem? I am so tired of hearing stories of attempts by the
>government - any government - getting involved in censorship and the
>apparent over-protection being meted out for the consumer public. Leave
>parental responsibilities to parents!

Please be careful with definitions. "Censorship" is eliminating public access to certain materials. The Canadian government is NOT engaging in "censorship", so defined, but rather limiting access to minors. This is similar to limiting access to pornography, tobacco, alcohol, yes, even voting and driving privileges from minors. Some may disagree, but it is generally accepted that children and teenagers should not have the "right" to be involved in these. If the Canadian government, supposedly with the support of the Canadian people, includes violent video games in this list of "rights" restricted from minors, then that's another discussion, but not "censorship".

Further, I would say such restrictions enable parents to exercise their responsibilities! If Junior says, "I want 'Soldier of Fortune'" and his parents can choose to go out and buy it for him, or not to, they are exercising their authority. Circumventing this by allowing Junior to obtain 'Soldier of Fortune' without his parent's knowledge and consent reduces the reasonableness of this appeal to "parental responsibility." The law doesn't say minors can't use this software, just that they can't buy it themselves. I'm not real sure about the laws regarding alcohol and tobacco, but I believe if a parent bought beer and cigarettes and let his child imbibe and smoke (at home), there wouldn't be any more said about it (well, not on legal grounds, anyway).

On the other hand, you might argue that this law could lull parents into a false sense of complacency. Junior might (and certainly could, if determined enough) obtain 'Soldier of Fortune' and install it on the peeece in his bedroom, and all the while his parents would be relaxed, confident that it would be "against the law" and therefore "impossible" for him to be exposed to this material they disagree with.

But in general, my opinion is that we can't hold parents responsible for what their children do if we object to reasonable means they have of exerting this responsibility! Kind of goes along with the outcry against parents wanting certain books removed from school libraries. Those evil parents! "Censorship!" is the cry. Nonsense.

So here's a vote against an emotional reaction over "censorship" which isn't happening.

David, I appreciate your comments but overall I disagree with them. The great thing is that you have the right to an opinion, as do I. Here's where I disagree:

From Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition:

Censorship:

To examine in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable.

Suppress:

Definition #5 - To restrain from a usual course or action.

While I will admit that I briefly struggled to come up with an adequate word to describe what I felt the British Columbia Attorney General recommended, the word "censor" seemed appropriate. As shown in the above definition, I believe that I used the appropriate term. By definition, it appears that this is exactly what was done in British Columbia.

If I might take the liberty of responding to your points individually (and an apology to our readers for repeating what you've already written above):

Please be careful with definitions. "Censorship" is eliminating public access to certain materials. The Canadian government is NOT engaging in "censorship", so defined, but rather limiting access to minors. This is similar to limiting access to pornography, tobacco, alcohol, yes, even voting and driving privileges from minors. Some may disagree, but it is generally accepted that children and teenagers should not have the "right" to be involved in these. If the Canadian government, supposedly with the support of the Canadian people, includes violent video games in this list of "rights" restricted from minors, then that's another discussion, but not "censorship".

By your own definition, the British Columbia Attorney General IS denying public access to "Soldier of Fortune" by those under 18. They've categorized the game under the same umbrella as pornography in order that they can defend the action. This is ridiculous! As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing wrong with "pornography" as long as the topic reflects consenting adults - whatever the definition of "adult" might be. Any other depiction is likely exploitive and an illegal activity. But we're getting off the subject!

Tobacco and alcohol are illegal to minors because of health issues. Once a person becomes an "adult", they can make their own choices in those regards. Voting is a right and driving is a privilege. Neither is germane to this discussion. Videogames have no place being lumped into these same categories.

Further, I would say such restrictions enable parents to exercise their responsibilities! If Junior says, "I want 'Soldier of Fortune'" and his parents can choose to go out and buy it for him, or not to, they are exercising their authority. Circumventing this by allowing Junior to obtain 'Soldier of Fortune' without his parent's knowledge and consent reduces the reasonableness of this appeal to "parental responsibility." The law doesn't say minors can't use this software, just that they can't buy it

themselves. I'm not real sure about the laws regarding alcohol and tobacco, but I believe if a parent bought beer and cigarettes and let his child imbibe and smoke (at home), there wouldn't be any more said about it (well, not on legal grounds, anyway).

Why do we need these restrictions to enable parents to exercise their responsibilities? If your 'Junior' says he wants "Soldier of Fortune" I will agree with you that the parents can buy it or not as they so choose. And if Junior says he's going to buy it himself, the parents can still say yea or nay. If Junior doesn't ask, or chooses to buy it anyway - whose fault is it? The parents and Junior. If the parents set proper guidelines, this should not even be an issue. I'll grant you that there will always be kids who will circumvent their parents' direction. Sorry, but government should not be the world's babysitter.

Alcohol and tobacco - not even the same ballpark. A minor cannot buy or possess alcohol - it's illegal. Can a parent let a child have a drink? Legally, no. If it's discovered a parent has allowed a child alcohol, it's child endangerment, or some such offense. Tobacco cannot be purchased by minors, but it's not illegal to possess it. Terrific law, right? Big deal. What's the point of the law, then? It's stupid and does little to deter tobacco use.

On the other hand, you might argue that this law could lull parents into a false sense of complacency. Junior might (and certainly could, if determined enough) obtain 'Soldier of Fortune' and install it on the peecee in his bedroom, and all the while his parents would be relaxed, confident that it would be "against the law" and therefore "impossible" for him to be exposed to this material they disagree with.

Only if parents were foolish enough to actually believe that this law would prevent Junior from ever getting his hands on the game.

But in general, my opinion is that we can't hold parents responsible for what their children do if we object to reasonable means they have of exerting this responsibility! Kind of goes along with the outcry against parents wanting certain books removed from school libraries. Those evil parents! "Censorship!" is the cry. Nonsense.

The "reasonable" means have been met with the use of ratings. Another means of responsibility comes from parents educating their children about such types of games. I highly disagree with your library analogy! Removing certain books from school libraries is indeed censorship! That's another issue, however.

So here's a vote against an emotional reaction over "censorship" which isn't happening.

In my book, it most certainly is. It's apparent that we're going to have to agree to disagree. But, I respect your opinion and your right to it. I don't hold it against you! <grin>

So readers, what do you think? Drop me a line at dpj@delphi.com and voice your opinions.

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

British Columbia to Rate Video Games for Violence

British Columbia, which last week restricted sales of a popular but violent video game as adult entertainment, will develop its own mandatory rating system for the programs, its attorney general said on Monday.

The system will be similar to that used to rate the content of movies and is intended to guide parents in buying or renting computer and video games and limit children's access to violent material, Andrew Petter told reporters.

"This is not an attempt at censorship. This is not an attempt to ruin people's day and take away from them the video game they want," said Petter, who admitted he also plays video games for fun.

Petter told a news conference the industry's current voluntary rating system does not give parents the information they need to protect children, but provincial officials said they want to work with game makers in developing the new enforceable system.

The game "Soldier of Fortune", which had its sales restricted in British Columbia as adult entertainment, is rated as "mature" by the industry and contains warnings about violent content on the box and at the start of the game.

Adult entertainment, such as porno films, cannot be sold to minors and must be displayed in a restricted area of a store. Limits of sales using the industry rating are voluntary, and B.C.'s action is believed to be a first in North America.

"I think many parents would be shocked to as to what the industry considers 'mature' as opposed to 'adult'," Petter said.

A player in Soldier of Fortune is given a variety of weapons to kill opponents. In a promotional simulation shown to reporters on Monday, blood splatters as a gunman blows away opponents -- shooting one victim on the ground repeatedly.

The Canadian Interactive Digital Software Association said the current rating system for North America was developed by independent experts, and it questions if it was practical for the province to develop its own ratings.

"In the end we've got to remember that it is the consumer who makes the decision," Harvey Nightingale, an association spokesman.

According to a survey released in May by the U.S.-based Interactive Digital Software Association, 28 percent of frequent players of computer games are under 18, while 30 percent are between 18 and 35.

Opponents of family violence say research has shown that children exposed

to violence in games and films are more prone to act out their aggressions as they grow older.

Square Ships Threads of Fate for the PlayStation

Square Electronic Arts announced the release of Threads of Fate for the PlayStation game console. Threads of Fate, an adventure role-playing game (RPG) features challenging puzzles, fast paced-action and two unique storylines. Players enter Threads of Fate as one of two characters and choose from two different but intersecting adventures to progress through the game.

In Threads of Fate, the two main characters are both in search of a rare artifact that stores the power to reshape reality. This artifact also holds the solution to both characters' problems.

As the male character, Rue, players embark on a mission to recover the artifact in order to resurrect the life of Rue's sister. For a more lighthearted adventure, players can also play as the female character, Princess Mint, who is in search of the artifact in a quest to regain her rights to the throne that were given to her younger sister.

Both characters travel through the game's eight levels and use their special powers to battle a variety of dangerous and powerful enemies. All enemies have a unique weakness, which players must learn in order to defeat them. Players will find enemies prowling in all levels of the game from branching caverns to lurking ponds.

During battle, players can employ a variety of spells and powers against their foes. Rue has the ability to assume the form of defeated enemies and utilize their powers for future battles. Princess Mint can cast breathtaking spells on her enemies and tailor them to specific situations allowing for efficient puzzle solving. She can also use two magic brass rings as weapons against her enemies. Throughout the game, all battles are fought in real-time, without any pauses in gameplay. Players must rely on their reflexes to kick and punch during attacks, providing non-stop action.

In keeping with Square's esteemed role-playing game tradition, Threads of Fate offers dazzling 3D graphics and brilliant colorful environments and settings. Character models are rendered in high-detail with facial expressions that display a wide variety of emotion and body movements that display human characteristics such as breathing. Each character has its own set of unique features and individual reactions to given situations encountered throughout the game.

Threads of Fate is compatible with the DUALSHOCK analog controller and has a suggested retail price of (US)\$40. The game carries an ESRB rating of 'E' (Everyone).

3DO Ships Army Men-Air Combat for Nintendo 64

The 3DO Company announced that it has begun shipping the Army Men-Air Combat game for the Nintendo 64 game system, the latest interactive battle in the company's hugely popular Army Men series, to retail outlets

The sky's the limit when players soar into the wild blue yonder with Captain William Blade, decorated hero, to single-handedly aid Sarge and turn the tides of war against the Tan alliance. Over ground, sea, and air, the battle wages, as the Air Cavalry embarks on a daring mission to rescue POW's, destroy Tan bases, sabotage enemy installations, and defeat General Plastro though the odds are stacked knee-deep against them.

Up to four soldiers can enlist for the ultimate in multiplayer combat, as the Army Men-Air Combat game blends an intuitive interface with fully interactive environments and an unsurpassed ease of play mechanics which ensures that choppers are up and running within minutes. Friends can team up in Cooperative Mode or blast one another out of the air in one of four Competitive Modes including Flag-Nab-It, Air Rescue, Food Fight, and Bug Hunt. The action hits even closer to home when a Rumble Pack is employed, sending the shock of anti-aircraft fire rocketing through the controller.

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July 13, 2000

For immediate release:

ROCHESTER, MN -- In a further demonstration of Songbird's support of CGE2K, owner Carl Forhan is pleased to announce some game competitions and special pricing for CGE2K attendees.

Songbird plans to hold high score competitions for the following games: Jaguar Protector and Lynx Remnant. Winners will receive selected Songbird prizes and discount coupons. Only a limited number of entries will be allowed, on a first-come basis.

Employees and relatives of Songbird and CGE Services are not eligible to enter the contests. See the Songbird table for the complete rules and entry forms.

And of course, all the new Songbird Jaguar and Lynx games will be available for play and purchase, along with a ton of other Atari merchandise. Jaguar Skyhammer was just recently released to a horde of grateful Atari fans, and other games such as Protector have also been surprise hits with customers. Some Songbird items will be offered at special discounted rates, only available to CGE2K attendees. "I know many Atari fans make a big sacrifice to attend a show like CGE2K," acknowledged Carl. "I want to give something back to the fans, by giving attendees-only a chance to buy Songbird merchandise at great prices."

Finally, CGE2K attendees will also get the first glimpse at future Songbird titles, such as Championship Racing and Cybervirus, as well as some long-awaited cheats for games like Ponx, Lexis, Protector, and Hyper Force.

Songbird Productions is the premier developer and publisher for the Atari Lynx and Jaguar. To keep up to date with the latest news at Songbird Productions, be sure to visit the company web site at

<http://songbird.atari.net>.

This message may be reprinted in its entirety.

Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions
<http://songbird.atari.net>

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Macworld Expo

All eyes will be on the Big Apple next week as Macworld Expo heads to New York's Javits Convention Center July 18-21. Conference sessions begin Tuesday, but the real action begins Wednesday when the exhibit floor opens following Steve Jobs' opening keynote.

As always, speculation and rumors are swirling around Apple's plans for the show. Will Apple announce a new iMac or iBook? A multiprocessor system? An Internet appliance? The public beta of Mac OS X?

The most likely announcement is a new revision of the iMac. Late in June, resellers reported to MacWEEK sister site MacCentral that iMac inventories were fast drying up, a good sign that a new iMac product line is awaiting a rollout. But outside of Cupertino, the specs for the new machine are anybody's guess. You can be sure that it will sport a faster processor, but will it have a bigger screen? A new video chip, perhaps ATI's recently announced Radeon? We'll find out on Wednesday.

How about a new multiprocessor system? Apple reportedly demonstrated a prototype of one during a closed-door session in May at the Worldwide Developers Conference. However, Jobs is also scheduled to deliver a keynote on August 29 at Seybold San Francisco, and that's been Apple's venue for products aimed at Mac professionals (Apple announced its first Power Mac G4 systems at last year's Seybold conference).

Mac OS X public beta? At WWDC, Apple announced that it would release the beta this summer. This means it could arrive Wednesday--or as late as September 21.

The keynote will be Webcast using QuickTime streaming technology. Apple will also offer a satellite feed.

Beyond Apple, Macworld Expo promises to be one of the busiest ever on the East Coast. ATI has said it will announce a graphics board based on its Radeon graphics chip. Orange Micro plans to show the first Mac hardware to support the USB 2.0 spec--a higher-speed version of USB that's aroused controversy among Mac users because it appears to challenge Apple's FireWire technology. However, FireWire is gaining steam as the number of FireWire-enabled computers keeps rising; many vendors of FireWire peripherals will be on the Expo floor.

One of the most interesting Expo products has already been announced. Power On Software's Rewind, as we recently reported, lets Mac users recover from a variety of software disasters--overwritten files, unknown viruses, and so on--by hitting a rewind button (see "A time machine for your Mac?")

Among other products to be shown at Expo:

\*Attendees can get a sneak preview of Vivid Details' Test Strip 3.0, a popular color-correction plug-in for Adobe Photoshop (see "Metamorphosis for Test Strip"). Vivid Details will be taking preorders at the show, but the company wasn't sure if the new Mac version will be ready for demonstrations.

\*Beatware will demonstrate e-Picture Pro, an upgrade of the Web-animation software introduced at last year's Macworld Expo New York. In a recent First Look, MacWEEK contributor Andrew Shalat wrote that it's the most versatile Web-animation product he's tried.

\*DiamondSoft will show Font Reserve Server, a client-server version of the Font Reserve font-management utility. The product allows users to seamlessly browse, download and activate fonts stored on a server. Administrators can configure sets of fonts that can be opened by specified workgroups.

\*Synthetik Software will show Studio Artist 1.5, a free update to the innovative "graphics synthesizer." The update adds numerous features, including 3-D lighting effects that can be incorporated into brushes; enhanced morphing and warping functions; and a keyframe timeline with layers.

\*Pixologic will show the first Mac version of ZBrush, a 3-D painting program that has won accolades in the PC market.

\*Totally Hip Software will demonstrate LiveSlideShow, a QuickTime-based presentation program

\*Numerous exhibitors will show new digital imaging products. All of the major printer vendors--Hewlett-Packard, Epson, Canon, Lexmark, Xerox, GCC and others--will be on hand. GCC plans to show the Elite series of 1,200-dpi monochrome laser printers, with prices ranging from \$1,299 to \$2,099.

\*Microtek plans to demonstrate the ScanMaker 8700, a 2,400-by-1,200-dpi, 42-bit flatbed scanner that will sell for \$999. Expected to ship in less than eight weeks, the scanner features an 8.5x15-inch scan bed, four film adapters and FireWire and USB connections.

#### Apple Unveils New Designs of Desktop Computers

Apple Computer Inc. on Wednesday unveiled a broader new line of desktop computers aimed at boosting computer power and sales, as well as the company's reputation for producing eye-catching designs in striking colors.

"This is the first time we've changed the iMac colors since January of 1999 when we introduced them," Apple Co-Founder and Chief Executive Steve Jobs said in an interview. "They (the new colors) are much more refined. The graphite (special edition iMac) was a really big seller so we took our cues off of that."

Earlier versions of the iMac -- the machines generally credited with revitalizing Apple -- came in bright fruity colors such as "blueberry" and "grape."

The new, more muted colors included indigo, ruby, snow and sage. He described sage "graphite with a few drops of Emerald City."

The new desktops included four new iMac computers in five colors starting at \$799, a cube-shaped and quiet version of the G4 computer and dual-processor Power Mac G4s, which he said were faster than the Pentium 3.

Jobs said he hoped that the iMac would touch off renewed consumer demand, especially with a new push into retail with a deal to sell computers at Circuit City Inc. stores nationwide.

"We have products consumers want to buy," Jobs said. "That's where they shop and that's where we want to have our products."

Analysts said the new product line is likely to boost revenues in coming quarters. The company's current fiscal fourth quarter and first quarter traditionally benefit from back-to-school and holiday sales.

''The main message is that Apple is in growth mode now," said Bear Stearns analyst Andrew Neff. ''The fourth quarter is going to be big and they are looking at 20 percent growth in revenues next year." Jobs took nearly two hours to show off the new line of computers and said each would come with a sleek new optical mouse, which does not need a mouse pad, and a new keyboard featuring a disk eject button.

''We are going from what some people believe is the worst mouse in history to what we think is the best mouse in history," he said, laughing about how the old round mouse that had been referred to as a hockey puck.

The new Power Mac G4 Cube is an 8-inch-square silvery box with a clear enclosure taking up roughly one-fourth the space of most PCs. It houses a 450 megahertz power PC G4 processor, which Apple said reaches speeds of over 3 billion calculations per second.

''We're putting supercomputer power in an 8-inch cube," Jobs said, calling the shiny box ''the most stunning computer ever designed."

The G4 Cube, which will be available in August, uses a cooling design that runs quietly because it does not require a fan.

Jobs also demonstrated faster versions of its professional line of Power Mac G4 machines running two computer chips at one time. He ran a graphics test to show the two power PC G4 processors running in tandem beating a Pentium 3 to complete a poster.

''These machines are wicked fast, leaving Pentiums in the dust," he said.

The first-ever dual-processor PowerMac computers in two models containing either 400 or 500 megahertz PowerPC chips.

The new PowerMacs will be priced in line with existing single-processor models, Jobs told an audience of the Apple faithful during a closely watched speech.

The new models range in price from an entry-level machine at \$799 to a high-end version at \$1,499. All models are available now, except for the \$799 model which is due out in September.

Jobs' appearance came the morning after Apple reported higher third-quarter sales and operating earnings, but he said its net income declined because of higher investment gains a year earlier.

The company also said that despite overall growth in units sold, sales of its iMac computer were ''a bit" below expectations, but said this appeared to be due to customers waiting for a newer version of the computer rather than to any general slackening of demand.

#### Microsoft Woos Apple Users with Mac-Friendly Office

Loyalists of Apple Computer Corp.'s machines have long seen rival Microsoft Corp. as, at best, a necessary evil to be grudgingly tolerated. But Microsoft, which makes some of the most crucial software for Apple computers, is showing a kinder, gentler face with a new branding campaign launched on Wednesday that is designed to appeal to Apple's quirky feel while playing down its own name and any hint of, shhh ... Windows.



''Mac customers are just predisposed to seeing Microsoft as, well, in any number of negative ways. So we needed to be going out and telling them that Microsoft was very serious about this market," Kevin Browne, general manager of Microsoft's Macintosh business unit, said in a recent interview.

The new look for Microsoft's unit that designs software to run on Apple's Macintosh operating system coincides with the unveiling of the latest Mac version of Microsoft's Office business software package that includes the Word word processor and Excel spreadsheet.

''The big news about Office 2001 is that it's the most Mac-like product we've ever introduced," Browne said.

Among the changes are new tool bars and icons, and a more muted color palate of pastels rather than the previous bright schemes that echoed those of Windows-based computers.

Aesthetic changes seem to be a minor point to some, but not to fickle Mac users, who after all are devoted to their machines as much for their unique shape and coloring as for their ability to nimbly handle video, music and graphics.

''What we have done there is really to take the product and remove a lot of the things that made it feel more like a Windows product, and added things that make it feel more like an Apple product," Browne said.

It also includes a new, Mac-only application called Entourage that combines e-mail with a calendar, task list and notepad to put a user's personal data in one place. A new clipboard lets users cut and paste between any application.

Microsoft hopes the new look will help propel sales beyond the 2.7 million copies that the 1998 version booked, Browne said. The software will go on sale in October.

Microsoft and Apple have been reluctant bedfellows.

At the MacWorld Expo three years ago, Apple chief Steve Jobs stunned the audience when he announced, under a looming video image of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, that Microsoft would invest \$150 million in his struggling company.

Though humbling for the Apple community, the agreement guaranteed that Microsoft would continue making software, in particular the Office suite, for the Mac.

Many analysts, and even Jobs, acknowledged that Apple would be dead without Office.

Earlier versions of Office infuriated Mac users, who had to put up with a shoddy product that was simply ''ported", or adapted, from the Windows version, but recent iterations are finally winning respect.

''It's going well, they are doing a great job. The best version of Microsoft Office is going to be on the Mac. That's kind of interesting and ironic," Jobs told Reuters in an interview at the MacWorld Expo in New York on Wednesday.

The changes to Office are just part of an overall shift in the way

Microsoft is approaching Mac users.

New Mac products will play down the Microsoft brand, and will be identified through a new ``:mac" suffix. For example, the new Office will be called ``Office:mac".

New logos tuck the Microsoft name in much smaller letters, below the product name, which is highlighted in bright colors. Office:mac will not ship in a cardboard box but in a colorful, rounded plastic case -- another nod to Apple culture.

A fresh advertising campaign will feature black-and-white photos of actual Mac users, sort of an everyman's version of Apple's popular ``Think Different" series of ads featuring great scientists, thinkers and artists.

``We're de-emphasizing our product and emphasizing our customers. It's a whole new visual identity and we think this will be a lot more effective in terms of reaching our customers," Browne said.

### FireWire Heats Up at Macworld Expo

FireWire will be a hot topic at this week's Macworld Expo New York as numerous exhibitors show new products based on Apple's high-speed hardware interface. With the release of FireWire PowerBooks--not to mention last year's iMac DV--more Mac users can now take advantage of FireWire, giving vendors greater incentive to offer FireWire peripherals.

However, FireWire's market penetration is still relatively low, making the peripherals more costly than the equivalent USB devices. Due to FireWire's low volume, converting a storage device to FireWire costs 2.5 times as much as converting it to USB, said Vincent Fedele, Chief Technology Officer of VST/SmartDisk Personal Storage Systems, which offers both USB and FireWire peripherals.

This is likely to change as FireWire gains acceptance in the personal computer and consumer electronics markets. Currently, six million computers--half of them Macs--have FireWire connections. But 26 million PCs will have FireWire by the end of this year and 52 million by the end of 2001, according to a recent report by In-Stat, a market research firm. The firm predicts that nearly 100 million PCs--and 75 million consumer electronics products--sold by 2003 will have FireWire or iLink, Sony's variation on the technology.

Fedele believes that FireWire and USB have played a big role in cutting Apple's hardware costs. The older connections that they replaced--SCSI, ADB, serial, and floppy controllers--were expensive, and Apple has further reduced manufacturing costs by consolidating motherboard components. PC manufacturers such as Compaq, Dell and Gateway, recognizing these advantages, are now adding USB and FireWire connections to their new machines.

The Expo show floor doesn't open until Wednesday, but many exhibitors here have already announced new FireWire products:

\*La Cie plans to demonstrate a host of FireWire products, including a 4.7 GB DVD-RAM drive, a 12x4x32 CDRW drive, a 75GB FireWire hard drive, a 32GB PocketDrive with USB and FireWire, and a FireWire RAID aimed at DV producers.

\*Keyspan will demonstrate FireWire PCI and Cardbus cards for older Macs that don't include the interface. The \$139 CardBus version works with Apple's PowerBook G3. The \$89 PCI version can be configured with three external ports or two external and one internal port. Both include a six-pin to four-pin connector and Apple's QuickTime Pro software, which otherwise sells for \$30.

\*Orange Micro will show the \$99 Orange Converter, which connects SCSI devices to FireWire ports, and the \$299 OrangeLink+ FireWire & SCSI U2W PCI Card, which combines two FireWire ports with an Ultra 2 Wide SCSI connection. The company also plans to demonstrate the first Mac-based PCI card and hub to support USB 2.0.

\*Epson will show the Expression 1640XL, a new tabloid-format flatbed scanner, targeted at graphics pros, that features an optional \$299 FireWire interface (see MacWEEK's First Look).

\*Umax will show the Astra 6400, a new \$249 flatbed scanner for SOHO users that offers 600 x 1,200 dpi optical resolution and 42-bit color depth. Its sibling, the \$299 Astra 6450, features a transparency cover capable of scanning positive or negative film up to 4 x 5 inches. You can add the transparency unit to the 6400 for \$69. Both include FireWire connections.

\*OnStream and Imation are both demonstrating FireWire versions of their tape drives. OnStream will show the \$599 Echo drive, which uses 30GB tape cartridges (30GB compressed, 15GB native) and transfers data at 2MB per second (the USB version chugs along at 0.85MB per second). Imation is showing a FireWire version of the Travan, a \$499 drive that uses 20GB cartridges (\$33.99 each). It, too, offers a 2MB per second transfer rate.

#### New Internet Domain Names OK'd

The private corporation overseeing changes on the Internet approved the creation Sunday of the first new top-level domain names on the computer network since the 1980s.

The decision, made at a conference in Japan by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, will bring additions to existing Web site suffixes such as ".com" and ".org." But how many more suffixes or how they will be used remains to be worked out.

The resolution, passed unanimously by ICANN's 19-member board, was praised by some as a boon to companies that register and sell the Internet labels.

"It's beautiful. It's a major step," said Steinar Grotterod, of Active ISP, an Internet service provider in Oslo, Norway.

But the move was criticized by some - including members of the ICANN board itself - for failing to set clear guidelines for the number of new names to be introduced or how they will be phased into use.

"It leaves too much to be decided later," said Esther Dyson, who chairs ICANN's board.

The addition of new names is aimed at boosting competition among companies that sell and register domains for Web site owners, and giving customers

more names and vendors to choose from.

It would also make it easier for Internet users to search the Web for specific topics. Travel agencies, for example, could use a ".travel."

The Internet now has a limited number of suffixes, including ".com", ".mil", ".int", ".gov", ".org", and ".net", in addition to special two-letter codes assigned to countries, such as ".us" for the United States.

Most of the country codes were established in the mid-1990s, but no new domain suffixes have been approved since the late 1980s. ICANN was chosen by the U.S. government in 1998 to take over Internet naming duties.

The resolution passed by ICANN Sunday calls for the introduction of new names in "a measured and responsible manner." The group set a schedule for the phasing in of the names, with a target date of Dec. 31 for wrapping up new agreements.

The resolution, however, was notable for what it did not spell out: How many new suffixes would be approved, whether they would be specific - such as being only for travel agencies - or would be available to anyone, and how trademark infringement would be avoided.

Some board members said the process would work because companies applying for new sites would propose measures to handle problems and guarantee stability on the Internet. Members also agreed that they would probably only be able to approve about six new names.

The vagueness, however, left many uneasy.

Worries about the introduction of new suffixes have bogged down discussions for five years and were a main theme running through ICANN's four-day conference in Yokohama.

Trademark infringement has been a major fear. Conferees discussed, for example, how to handle a request for "amazon.shop" and whether that would infringe on the rights of the well-known "amazon.com."

The resolution, however, only called on companies making applications for new names to show how they would avoid legal troubles.

Eileen Kent, an intellectual property rights consultant, criticized ICANN for not taking a more regulated approach, such as approving only one or two names and then taking stock of the effects before continuing with more.

"There has to be more control, rules and regulations to make sure this goes smoothly," she said. "The result ... is going to be an avalanche of infringement lawsuits."

ICANN members, however, have said there are legal and other precedents to prevent widespread confusion.

The ICANN board on Sunday also approved a proposal to allow registered Internet users to elect five of the board's 19 members. Elections will be held in October.

AllAdvantage.com said today it has laid off nearly 10 percent of its staff in a move to cut costs.

The 16-month-old start-up, which pays members to surf the Web and view advertisements, cut its work force by 60 people Friday. The company will now employ 600 internationally. The layoffs came within all divisions of the company and focused on U.S.-based employees, the company said.

Hayward, Calif.-based AllAdvantage has become a victim of its own costly success. It draws new members by promising them cash for time spent online. Companies then pay AllAdvantage to run targeted ads based on member profiles.

But the weight of paying its members has ended up crushing AllAdvantage's revenues. The company paid \$32.7 million to members from December to March but made only \$9.1 million in the same period.

Along with skyrocketing member costs, the size of the company has mushroomed since March 1999.

"That kind of growth is too fast now that market conditions have changed," Jim Jorgensen, AllAdvantage's chief executive, said in a statement. "We have taken stock of the large number of assets we have created, and our plan going forward is to leverage all of these assets more efficiently."

Earlier this month, AllAdvantage halted plans to go public. The company cited adverse market conditions, according to a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In February, it filed to sell 15 million shares to the public for \$8 to \$10.

The company now must cut costs to survive. In June, it reduced the number of hours it will pay members to surf and lengthened its pay schedule.

Months after the company launched, nearly 7 million people had signed up. Nearly 2 million now actively participate. The company said the layoffs are also part of an effort to consolidate departments.

## 2nd Free Web Service Dissolves

For the second time this month, Juno Online has gobbled up a competing free Internet access provider.

Freewwwweb LLC ceased operations Wednesday night and, with court approval, began referring its subscribers to Juno's free Internet access service, Juno said. Freewwwweb filed for bankruptcy last month.

"The deal is very similar to the one we struck with WorldSpy, said Juno spokesman Gary Baker. Freewwwweb claimed more than 700,000 subscribers, according to Juno, which put Worldspy.com's active subscriber total at 260,000 when it folded in early July.

The two companies failed primarily for lack of advertising revenues - WorldSpy didn't advertise at all while Freewwwweb didn't do it enough, Juno's president, Charles Ardaï, told The Associated Press.

Free Internet access no longer offers great possibilities.

''The window of opportunity for new players to jump into this market or for players to jump in from scratch and launch free services is really closed, said Zia Daniell Wigder, an analyst at Jupiter Communications.

Jupiter ranks Juno fifth among U.S. Internet service providers with 1.7 million active subscribers at the end of the first quarter. Comparatively, America Online Inc. had 20.3 million paid subscribers nationwide.

Juno advertises heavily on its free Internet access service but its hybrid business model also offers high-speed Internet access at a cost.

Ardai said Juno was paying primarily in common stock, with a smaller portion in cash, for every Freewwwweb subscriber who signs up with Juno.

While not offering specifics, Ardai did say that the bulk of the payments to Freewwwweb would be made only after a transferred subscriber had been active for three months.

Freewwwweb is owned by New York-based Smart World Technologies LLC, which did not return telephone calls on Thursday.

Juno said Freewwwweb subscribers who convert to Juno would be able to continue receiving e-mail sent to their Freewwwweb address and continue to enjoy free Web access. As well, those subscribers will have the option of upgrading to one of Juno's billable premium services.

Juno had \$24 million in revenue in the first quarter of 2000, said Ardai, about 70 percent of it from subscription fees. Its stock closed at \$9.313 on the Nasdaq Stock Market Thursday, down 9.3 cents.

''Our goal is to get as many of our subscribers to pay eventually, said Ardai. The company, founded in 1996, has yet to show a profit.

#### Metamorphosis for Test Strip

Vivid Details has taken the wraps off Test Strip 3.0, an upgrade of the popular color-correction plug-in for Adobe Photoshop. New features include an automated photo-enhancement function, a greater selection of layouts and movable gels for previewing image modifications. As with previous versions, Test Strip 3.0 presents multiple variations of an image with different color settings, letting you choose the one that looks best.

The company plans to demonstrate the cross-platform plug-in at next week's Macworld Expo, but may be limited to showing the Microsoft Windows version. Vivid Details' Kirk Lyford told MacWEEK that the company has rewritten the Mac version from scratch and may not have it ready in time for the show. Upgrades from Test Strip 2.0 will cost \$49.95.

As before, Test Strip 3.0 provides five panels for making image corrections: Ring-Around (formerly Color Balance) and One Color for removing color casts; Exposure for making brightness and contrast adjustments; Saturation for modifying color intensity; and Before & After for previewing the modified image next to the original. Each panel presents the image overlaid with a series of panes. By default, the center pane shows the current image and the others show variations. You modify the

image by clicking on the variations.

Among the new features:

**Gels.** These are movable, resizable strips available in the One-Color, Exposure and Saturation Panels. When you select a Gel from the layout menu, you can move it to any position on the image, showing the effect of the selected color operation underneath. You can group Gels so they move together and overlap them to show a combination of effects. You can also quickly hide or show a Gel effect by double-clicking on the Gel's title bar or clicking on a collapse button. You can have up to nine Gels on one image.

**Metamorphosis.** This is an automatic photo-enhancement option accessed by clicking on a button in the Ring-Around Panel. The software previews the image in a series of pairs; as you select the one that looks best, Test Strip automatically corrects color, saturation, density and dynamic range. When you are finished, the software switches to the Before & After Panel so you can compare the modified image with the original.

**More layouts.** The One Color, Exposure and Saturation Panels now offer a much wider selection of layouts. You can choose from horizontal or vertical layouts with two, three, five or seven strips; or grids with four, six or nine cells. The Ring-Around Panel, in addition to the standard 3x3 layout, now lets you preview RGB, CMY, warm or cool color casts, each in a 2x2 grid.

**Movable Current Strip.** In Test Strip 2.0, the current image is shown in the middle strip, and variations with greater or lesser color-correction values, such as plus or minus 10 percent magenta, are shown on either side. In the new version, you can move the current image strip to any other position. If you move the current strip all the way to the left, the other strips will show only greater values: plus 10 percent, 20 percent, and so on. Move it to the right and the strips to the left show lesser values.

**Step and Repeat.** By default, the plug-in shows the entire image with a test strip overlay. The step and repeat option replicates the entire image--or an identical portion of the image--in each pane. Previously, only the Color Balance Panel offered a repeating-image layout.

**Exposure Panel.** The Exposure Panel now lets you edit gray-scale photos in addition to color images. You can also perform color and brightness adjustments separately on highlight, midtone or shadow areas.

**Task List.** Test Strip 3.0 adds several enhancements to the Task List, an editable list of changes made to the image. You can now hit an Update button to preview the effects of any edits you make to the list. You can also export the list as a text file.

## Maxtor Introduces 80GB IDE Hard Drive

Maxtor announced three new hard drives today. Maxtor claims that the largest, the 80GB DiamondMax 80, is the largest IDE hard drive announced to date. It features four 20GB platters spinning at 5400RPM along with an ATA100 interface and a 2MB cache. Richard Van Dyke, Senior Manager, hard disk drives at Maxtor, told MacWEEK that all of Maxtor's ATA100 drives will ramp down to ATA66 or ATA33 to be compatible with current Mac systems. The

diamondMax 80 will be available in August and retail for \$349.

Maxtor will also release a \$299 45GB version with three 15GB platters spinning at 7200RPM mechanism, and the \$199, 40GB DiamondMax VL 40, which spins at 5400RPM.

#### King Posts New Work on Internet

Stephen King plans to begin an experiment in direct publishing Monday by posting the first installment of a new novel online and asking readers to pay through the honor system.

Installment one of ``The Plant will be posted on King's Web site on July 24 and installment two on Aug. 21. Part three will appear in September if ``pay-through equals or exceeds 75 percent, according to a message on his Web site dated July 11.

Readers will be asked to send King a check or money order for \$1 per installment in a direct transaction that King describes as a way to thumb your nose at the publishing industry.

``My friends, we have a chance to become Big Publishing's worst nightmare, the Web site reads. ``Not only are we going glueless, look Ma, no e-Book! No tiresome encryption!

The novel, to be posted in parts ranging from 5,000 to 7,000 words, is described as ``sort of funny and at the same time pretty gruesome. It describes a ``vampire vine that takes over the offices of a paperback publishing company and offers financial success for human sacrifice.

King, 52, said he's counting on two things: honest readers, and a story that will be good enough to keep them reading.

``Remember: Pay and the story rolls. Steal and the story folds, he wrote on the site. ``No stealing from the blind newsboy!

The multimillionaire horror author got the idea after a reader mailed him \$2.50 out of guilt at having read his e-book, ``Riding the Bullet, for free from an unauthorized Web site.

That work was only available online through several book-related Web sites. It went on sale in March. King wrote the book while recuperating from being struck by a van last summer.

On the Net: <http://www.stephenking.com>

#### Bill Would Restrain Junk E-Mail

Legislation passed by the House Tuesday would make it easier for consumers to keep unsolicited junk e-mail off their computers.

The legislation, which passed 427-1, also gives Internet service providers, or ISPs, new legal weapons to combat junk e-mail, or ``spam" messages, that clog their networks.



''The most annoying thing about the Internet is junk e-mail," said Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., sponsor of the bill. In addition to deluging consumers with often false or pornographic messages, she said it costs ISPs an estimated \$1 billion a year to cope with the added traffic of millions of spam messages.

''It's a tool that can now be used to filter and stop unwanted intrusions into our homes and offices," Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas, said of the legislation.

The bill requires those sending unsolicited commercial electronic (UCE) mail messages to provide a valid return electronic mail address so recipients can serve notice that they want to be taken off the mailing list.

The Federal Trade Commission is given the authority to bring action against spam senders who violate the provisions of the legislation. ISPs can also sue spammers in federal court for \$500 per message, up to \$50,000, if a spammer willfully breaks anti-spamming law.

Rich D'Amato, a spokesman for America Online, the nation's largest Internet provider, said AOL appreciates the way the bill focuses on enforcement of spamming rules. ''We've tried to eliminate it as a nuisance to our members," he said, noting that the company had sued more than 40 junk e-mail companies and individuals over the past three years.

A survey conducted last year by the Gartner Group found that 90 percent of e-mail users receive spam at least once a week and almost 50 percent get spammed six or more times a week.

Wilson said her bill had been crafted to answer the questions of civil liberties groups about possible curbs on free speech rights. She stressed that spammers ''have no right to force us to listen to or force us to pay the cost of junk e-mail."

The single no vote was cast by Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas.

The bill number is H.R. 3113

On the Net: Congressional summary: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

#### Microsoft 'Patch' Helps Web Privacy

After years of criticism by privacy advocates for its inaction, Microsoft Corp. plans to introduce new software that will let Internet surfers know when online marketers are taking a peek at their private information.

Microsoft has sent a select group of testers a new software ''patch that would warn users when advertisers or other third parties are trying to place files on their computers - called ''cookies - to be used for tracking surfing patterns or other private information.

Some cookies are beneficial, such as the ones Web sites use to personalize content for individual users.

But any given Web page visited on the Internet may upload more than one

cookie to a surfer's computer. So in addition to a cookie from the Web page owner, a third-party file could come from an advertiser seeking marketing data.

Bob Herbold, Microsoft's chief operating officer, said the key to the new software is to equip people ''to make intelligent security decisions by letting them know when cookies are being uploaded to their computers.

Microsoft's new software, for use with the Internet Explorer Web browser, will let the user know when a third party tries to install a ''persistent cookie - one that will remain on the user's computer even after he or she leaves the Web site.

The user will see a box pop up on the display, asking whether the computer should accept that particular cookie. It also lets the user ban all third-party persistent cookies if desired.

Privacy advocates, while criticizing Microsoft for taking as long as it did, generally praised the company's new software.

''This is a great sign, said Jason Catlett, president of the privacy group Junkbusters. ''Of course, many people are using quite old versions of the various browsers, so it will take some time before many people are using it.

Some, however, are still urging the U.S. Congress to act to protect consumers from having their personal information gathered without their knowledge - something that third-party persistent cookies have been used for in the past.

''There's a place for technological fixes, but there's also a place for legal changes, said Andrew Shen, a policy analyst for the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

Microsoft plans to make the software generally available in about four weeks, once testing is complete.

#### U.S. Lawmakers Introduce Workplace Privacy Measure

Legislation introduced on Thursday in both houses of Congress would require companies to tell employees if they monitor their computer, Internet or telephone use.

The legislation would require employers to inform their employees once a year if they are watching, what they are watching and what they do with the information when they have collected it.

More than 78 percent of large U.S. firms monitor employee communications on the job, twice as many as reported doing so in 1997, according to an April survey by the American Management Association.

The measure introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate would not force employers to change their surveillance habits and would not require them to notify employees each time they check on them.

Employees could sue their bosses for up to \$20,000 if they found they were being monitored without their knowledge.

''We're not saying, 'abolish this practice,' we're just saying employees have a right to know when they're being watched, said Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat who introduced the bill in the Senate.

The measure was introduced in the House by Republican Reps. Bob Barr of Georgia and Charles Canady of Florida, who also plan to question FBI officials next week about the agency's Internet surveillance system Carnivore, which is used to monitor public electronic mail traffic going to and from Internet service providers.

The FBI claims the system filters out innocent traffic to focus on specific suspects, but critics worry about excessive government snooping and the legal basis for the e-mail monitoring.

''It's part of the same overall issue, Barr said. ''I think it (surveillance) is a problem everywhere.

The ''vast majority of employers let workers know if they are being watched, said Lewis Malthby, president of the National Workrights Institute.

But that notice is usually vague, giving workers little idea of how they are being monitored, Malthby said. Under the proposed legislation, companies would have to be far more specific about their behavior.

Gregory Nojeim, legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, agreed.

''I don't think a blanket statement would meet the criteria of this bill, he said.

But employers could probably get away with a notice saying they monitored employee use on an ''occasional or ''random basis, Nojeim said.

Schumer predicted that the bill would pass Congress easily, given its modest scope.

''This is so easy to comply with, almost every employer will do it, he said.

Lobbyists for various industry groups either declined comment or did not return calls.

#### E-mail Inundation Becoming Common

Anyone who has e-mail probably experiences it. You go away for a few days - in some cases, even a few hours - and boom! Your e-mailbox is crammed full.

John Parker's heart sank last week when he returned from a two-week vacation to find well over 250 e-mails awaiting him.

So he did what many increasingly overwhelmed e-mail users are doing.

''I'm afraid I just basically moved them all into the trash basket," said the Washington bureau chief for the British magazine The Economist.

As far as Parker is concerned, you can opt to spend all day doing e-mail or you can do your work: ``But you can't do both."

Technology may make it easier for others to reach us. And it may increase our penchant to communicate. But e-mail inundation is becoming so common that some people are drawing the line.

``The speed of technology is driving me insane!" says Maria Salomao, a public relations executive from San Francisco and one of dozens of people to reply to an online query about the ever-increasing volume of e-mail and voicemail.

``If you're not conscious about it or if your goal is to accomplish your 'to do' list, then you are in for a rude awakening," she says. ``The list never ends."

Salomao and several others said that in recent months they've begun replying to fewer e-mails and are getting fewer responses to message that they've sent.

In Australia - a country that has made big efforts to get its citizens connected to the Web - tax officials have been so swamped by e-mail questions they've had to send auto-responses telling e-mailers they'll have to wait at least two weeks.

Even experts - including Eric Yaverbaum, author of ``I'll Get Back To You" - are proving hard to reach.

``I've become the guy I used to curse at, and I feel bad," says Yaverbaum, who gets about 100 voicemails and e-mails daily. ``But what can you do?"

So who's sending all this stuff anyway?

Some of the e-mail jamming our boxes is, of course, unsolicited junk mail.

Jupiter Communications, which tracks this sort of thing, projects that marketing-related e-mail messages will increase 40-fold between 1999 and 2006. It says the average online user received 1,746 e-mails in 1999 and will receive 2,052 this year.

Then there are people like Sreenath Sreenivasan, a professor of new media at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, who sends so much e-mail - 250 a day - that his friends have come up with a name for it: ``sree-mail."

Some of it is school-related; some goes to people on group lists he has created, including one dedicated to news from Asia.

``Pity the fools," Sreenivasan jokes of those who actually sign up for his lists.

Much of the mail he sends requires no reply. But even when he expects a response, he says it's a good idea to be patient.

``When you deal with people who only have dial-up (modem) service and have real lives and don't hang out in front of a computer like I do, you can't expect an immediate reply," Sreenivasan says.

Experts do have a few tips for dealing with an unruly e-mailbox.

''On the receiving side, you have to prioritize," Yaverbaum says.

Sreenivasan, for example, goes through and immediately deletes anything that looks like junk mail - much like he uses the trash can that sits next to his postal mailbox in his apartment lobby.

''Anybody sees an e-mail from someone they don't know and they erase it automatically now," said Patrick Keane, a Jupiter Communications analyst who tracks online advertising.

Many popular e-mail client programs offer message filtering that can be configured so an urgent request from, say, the boss surges to the top of your e-mail queue.

''On the sending side," suggests Yaverbaum, ''you've got to make every e-mail and voicemail count."

In the business world, he says that means keeping it brief - and asking for a response if you expect one.

And even at home, experts suggest forwarding fewer jokes and attached files to build credibility with those you're sending to.

Even then, some say e-mail may not be the best way to deal with an urgent matter.

''Frankly, I never assume that somebody's going to reply to an e-mail," Parker says. ''If I don't get a response, I'll send another e-mail or - better yet - pick up the phone."

#### FTC's Quack Attack

Miracle cures for cancer, Alzheimer's disease and arthritis. Pills for bigger breasts, weight loss, enhanced libido and supercharged immune systems. All are just a mouse click away on the Net. And though many of the come-ons are outright illegal, they proliferate in cyberspace with little regulatory oversight.

Both the Federal Trade Commission ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)) and the Food and Drug Administration ([www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)) are well-armed with regulatory authority to deal with the age-old problem of bogus medicines and health fraud. The challenge is resources: Only 16 employees in the federal government track sales of unsubstantiated therapies and remedies on the Internet on a full-time basis.

At the same time, anecdotal evidence suggests that the problem is growing. While admitting they lack precise figures, federal officials estimate there are "thousands" of snake-oil scams going down on the Net at any given time. The FTC identified more than 800 such sites in its last two organized online sweeps.

And the cyber con artists are unusually brazen.

"We consistently find that claims being made on the Net are more egregious than those being made in print," says Lee Peeler, associate director for the division of advertising practices at the FTC.

Late last month, the FTC announced a \$1 million settlement with Lane Labs USA and Cartilage Consultants Inc. on charges of making unsubstantiated claims online about the efficacy of using shark cartilage to cure cancer.

Earlier this year, the FTC announced four settlements with errant site operators. These included Natural Heritage Enterprises, which claimed its "Essiac Tea" was a "well-known" alternative remedy for cancer, and two distributors of a product called CMO, which sellers said was effective in treating arthritis, asthma and emphysema. The fourth settlement was with Gordon Josephs, an Arizona doctor who practiced intravenous peroxide therapy and claimed it could cure "virtually every disease," according to the FTC.

These victories aside, federal regulators and consumer advocates who fight medical fraud voice suspicions that the growing popularity of the Web is fueling an explosion in bogus or misleading health information.

"The Internet is adding another dimension to the problem," says Stephen Barrett, a retired psychiatrist who operates the site Quackwatch.com. "There is no question that people are being exposed to information they wouldn't otherwise find. The Web enables people to put far more information up for less money." John Taylor, acting director of the Office of Compliance at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research at the FDA, describes the myriad unapproved health products being sold via the Net as "a growing problem."

The people who buy all this snake oil don't readily make their identities known, because they either truly believe in a remedy that they know is illicit or are too embarrassed to admit their gullibility. For that reason, the FTC and FDA receive very few complaints in this area, but the laws are written in such a way that neither agency needs a victim to prosecute an offense. Either can bring suits based strictly on the nature of the product and on how it is being marketed.

The FDA's labeling rules are unequivocal: If a product says it can cure an illness, it is considered a drug and can only be approved for sale after extensive clinical testing has proven its effectiveness. The FTC gives slightly more leeway, but not much. It requires that any curative claim be supported by at least two well-controlled clinical studies.

But bogus remedy sites aren't beyond manufacturing their own "evidence," or liberally sprinkling pseudoscientific blather through their pages to give the appearance of legitimacy. A favorite ruse is a claim of ongoing European clinical studies that often don't exist, are poorly designed or are blatantly misrepresented. In general, the FTC advises Netizens to be on the lookout for such key words as "scientific breakthrough," "miraculous cure" or "ancient remedy" as likely signs that all is not right. U.S. organizations with treatment centers in Mexico or South America are also caution signs, as the drugs or therapies most likely have not been approved in the U.S.

"Often, there is quite a bit of truth and reference material, but the bottom line is that this is artificial bait," says Dr. John Renner, chief medical officer at Healthscout.com. "Some people think the more information you get, the better it is."

Renner also runs the National Council for Reliable Health Information ([www.ncrhi.org](http://www.ncrhi.org)), a watchdog group that keeps a close eye on potential online quacks. Its list of suspect sites includes Urinet

([www.utopia.knoware.nl/users/cvdk/urinetherapy](http://www.utopia.knoware.nl/users/cvdk/urinetherapy)), which espouses the medicinal benefits of drinking one's own urine; Bustingout.com, which promises bigger breasts in a little pill; and a Web page promoting and selling Cancell ([www.best.com/~handpen/Cancell/cancell.htm](http://www.best.com/~handpen/Cancell/cancell.htm)), an "anti-cancer" drug that the National Cancer Institute ([www.nci.nih.gov](http://www.nci.nih.gov)) and the FDA have declared totally ineffective. "There are just plain dishonest purveyors out there who are very good at what they do," Renner says. "And the scientific literacy of the public is not what it should be."

Nor is the oversight. With resources at a minimum, the FTC runs two Web monitoring programs, called "surfs," under the name Operation Cure.All. The surfs, which include personnel from the FDA and state attorneys general offices, are a coordinated effort to identify bogus health sites. Last year's effort netted 400 problem sites. The FDA sends some of the sites warning letters, and moves to shut down others.

But the system offers irregular enforcement at best and tends to pick up only the worst offenders, critics say. In the end, the responsibility for deciding if a Web-advertised remedy is effective and safe is almost entirely the consumer's.

"[The feds] don't have an enforcement staff. They run sting operations," says Allen Montgomery, chief executive of the American Nutraceutical Association. "If you state on the Net that you can cure cancer, you'd better watch out. Meanwhile, there are thousands of [other] sites making ludicrous claims."

Similarly, state attorneys general offices typically track online snake oil only during organized surfs or when a case drops in their lap. Even when they have a hot case, catching the culprit is more difficult in cyberspace.

"On the Internet, it is harder to track a company or an individual because they can hide," says Jack Norris, an assistant attorney general in Florida.

Robert Reyna, director of the Consumer Protection Division at the New Mexico Attorney General's Office, agrees, adding: "We're really in the training stage of how to use the Net as an investigative tool."

State attorneys general have been much more proactive in targeting illegal prescription sales, but that pretty much is the limit of their organized health fraud efforts, say those familiar with the situation. The American Medical Association ([www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org)) does not monitor online health fraud, nor does the National Fraud Information Center ([www.fraud.com](http://www.fraud.com)). Law enforcers aren't entirely alone, however. A rag-tag posse of snake-oil vigilantes occasionally helps identify culprits and even contributes to investigations.

Quackwatch's Barrett falls into this category. His latest target is Florsheim Shoes, which sells a line of footwear called Magneforce. The shoes contain magnets that the company claims on its Web site "increase circulation, reduce foot, leg and back fatigue and provide natural pain relief and improved energy level."

Barrett is dubious: "I predict the FTC will flatten them like a pancake - it's brazen."

Florsheim officials counter that they are within the law, and they cite

several clinical studies supporting the health benefits of magnets.

Ludnil Chotkowski, a retired internist, is another self-proclaimed online quack buster. His primary beef is with chiropractic medicine, which he calls "a hoax from start to finish." Chotkowski is a doubting Thomas when it comes to alternative remedies. "Just because they're natural doesn't mean a damned thing. Show me the [scientific] proof," he says.

Nearly everyone involved in the cyber snake-oil issue agrees that the present state of affairs is largely a result of the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 - the legislation that gave birth to the booming \$15 billion dietary supplement industry.

The law created a new category of "food supplements" that do not need to be tested like drugs as long as they do not purport to "treat or cure" an illness. Critics say the act provided a dance hall of details in which the devil can frolic, giving companies new leeway to tiptoe around the drug-approval issue. "It opened the door for every scoundrel to use the law to their advantage," Reyna says.

Chotkowski agrees: "It was 'open sesame' for selling anything you wanted."

Exacerbating the situation was the fact that the FDA took six years to announce rules for supplement labeling. In January, the agency said food supplements could refer to structures and functions of the body but not claim an ability to diagnose or treat a disease outright.

The new rule states: "Although FDA believes that dietary supplements have potential benefits for consumers, dietary supplements labeled with unproven disease claims, i.e., those that have not met the requirements for health claim authorization or new drug approval, can pose serious risks."

The gray area between legal structure and function claims - for example, fish oil pills that claim to "contribute to heart and vascular health" - and illegal curative statements is subtle and has resulted in consumer confusion about the difference between supplements and drugs, critics say. Some sites carry the federally mandated labeling disclaimer: "This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease."

But plenty don't - and are doing their best to dodge scrutiny, regulators say.

The alternative medicine industry isn't entirely happy with the food supplement statute either. Advocates for such cures and therapies say the stringent drug testing requirements of the FDA make it impossible for most supplements ever to become drugs, because big pharmaceutical companies won't spend money on substances they can't patent.

"Nobody wants to spend \$80 million on a new drug study for a vitamin," says Ralph Fucetola, a lawyer who counsels supplement companies.

And without extensive clinical proof, alternative-medicine practitioners and supporters have a hard time mollifying their critics.

Karen Hornblatt, president of Green Turtle Bay Vitamin in Summit, N.J., concedes that the huge growth of the supplement industry has led to some multilevel marketing schemes promoting products with doubtful uses but adds that they don't present much of a danger to the consumer. "In some cases you do get unreasonable claims," she says, "but the downside for



natural products is limited."

While that statement may be arguable, the FTC is doing its best to stay out of the emotionally charged fray.

"When we talk about health fraud, we're not talking about differences in philosophy - we're talking about claims that are false," Peeler says.

Kal Samulonis, president of CMO Distribution Centers of America in Sarasota, Fla., says the FDA and FTC rules don't mesh because one requires extensive drug testing while the other settles for just a few studies. "Our government is currently caught in a conflict with itself. I think it's a real shame," says Samulonis, whose company settled a misleading advertising complaint with the FTC earlier this year.

Samulonis is also unhappy about the way the FTC handled his company's claims that CMO can cure arthritis. "Despite credible work at an acclaimed research facility, we didn't meet their criteria for [clinical evidence]," Samulonis says. "We're now in a situation where you just make a claim and pray."

Len Sands, director of the San Diego International Immunological Center, licenses CMO to Samulonis and offered evidence of its efficacy to the FTC. "The FTC said that we were not an authority on the subject, and would not accept the data. We've cured 100,000 patients of arthritis and that wasn't good enough," Sands says.

FTC officials respond that they're not just looking at the type of data being offered as evidence but at its quality. In the CMO case, Sands' work just wasn't convincing, says Rich Cleland, a senior attorney at the FTC and the person in charge of Operation Cure.All. "You've got to have rigorous scientific evidence to make these kinds of claims," Cleland says.

In the end, federal officials say, the only real solution to the online snake-oil problem is continued awareness coupled with improved oversight.

"The answer is a combination of good enforcement with good consumer education," Taylor says. "I don't think enforcement, in and of itself, is the answer."

While it's true that public awareness is essential in the battle against health fraud, consumers often become extremely vulnerable - and find themselves flying solo - when desperate health problems have eluded all conventional therapies.

With enforcement resources so limited, Reyna says, "the consumer is left to sift through it all."

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